

September 17, 2009

TO: Don Barber Senior Field Representative
Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE)

FROM: Teresa Parsons, SPHR
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Brenda Farland v. Lower Columbia College (LCC)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-08-082

On May 15, 2009, I conducted a Director's review telephone conference regarding the allocation of Brenda Farland's position. You, Ms. Farland, and Tracy Stanley, Shop Steward, all participated in the Director's review conference. Ms. Stanley also works in Information Technology Services at LCC. Susan Parvey, Human Resource Specialist, and Nolan Wheeler, Director of Human Resource Services, represented LCC.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to August 13, 2008, the date Ms. Farland requested a position review. As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review conference, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of Ms. Farland's assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude her position should be reallocated to the Information Technology 4 classification.

Background

Ms. Farland is assigned to the Computer Maintenance section of Information Technology Services within Administrative Services (Exhibit B-7). On August 13, 2008, Ms. Farland submitted a Position Review Request (PRR), asking that her Information Technology 3 (ITS 3) position be reallocated to the Information Technology 4 (ITS 4) classification. Ms. Farland's supervisor, Steve Jones, Information Services Manager, signed the PRR indicating that the description of duties was accurate and complete. On October 6, 2008, Ms. Parvey issued the Results of Classification Review, determining Ms. Farland's position was properly allocated to the ITS 3 classification.

On November 4, 2008, the Department of Personnel received Ms. Farland's request for a Director's review of LCC's allocation determination.

Summary of Ms. Farland's Perspective

Ms. Farland asserts she is a senior level specialist performing setup, configuration, maintenance, and integration with other systems/software on LCC's Course Management System (Angel) and Document Imaging System (Hershey). Ms. Farland states that she performs analysis, design, acquisition requests, installation, and maintenance on both systems. Ms. Farland contends that she applies advanced technical knowledge and uses considerable discretion to evaluate and resolve complex issues. She also notes that she develops security policies and standards for both systems and that the systems impact multiple areas at LCC, have wide-area impact, and affect how the college's mission is accomplished. Ms. Farland contends she has full responsibility for managing the Course Management System and assumed responsibility for the Document Imaging System, which she indicates had previously been assigned to an ITS 4 position. Since the departure of two ITS 4 positions, Ms. Farland contends her duties and level of responsibility increased, and she believes the ITS 4 classification is the best fit for her position.

Summary of LCC's Reasoning

LCC acknowledges that Ms. Farland supports, maintains and secures the Course Management System (Angel). LCC further notes the majority of Ms. Farland's duties and responsibilities involve working on the Angel System and server. LCC asserts Ms. Farland performs functions as a fully qualified ITS 3. LCC indicates that Ms. Farland has applied advanced technical knowledge to evaluate and resolve complex tasks on long term projects as well as emergency situations. However, LCC describes the scope of work assigned to Ms. Farland's position as maintenance and support rather than higher-level, senior functions. LCC asserts Ms. Farland's position does not supervise or serve as a project lead and does not have purchasing authority. LCC indicates that her supervisor, Mr. Jones, retains the decision-making authority. LCC contends the duties, responsibilities, scope, complexity, and typical work assigned to Ms. Farland's position are best described by the ITS 3 classification.

Rationale for Director's Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

Duties and Responsibilities

Ms. Farland completed and signed a Position Review Request (PRR) form on July 22, 2008. On August 13, 2008, her supervisor, Information Services Manager Steve Jones, signed the PRR agreeing that the information was accurate and complete (Exhibit A-5). The Position Description Form (PDF) for her position dates back to 2003, prior to the implementation of the ANGEL system (Exhibit B-6). As a result, I placed more emphasis on the PRR.

In summary, the Position Purpose is described as follows (Exhibit A-5):

- Analyze, design, configure, monitor, and maintain complex computer systems such as ANGEL LMS and Streaming Media Services. These systems must integrate with Microsoft's Cluster Services, SQL [database], IIS, FTP [file transfer protocol], and in-house applications.
- Coordinate, maintain, and resolve problems with Windows Active Directory, Internet Protocol (IP) Address List, Windows Systems Update Services, and Symantec Antivirus status ensuring all computers added to LCC's network are secure and report properly to the network.
- Responsibility for LCC's Document Imaging System

In the Main Job Duties section of the PRR, the majority of duties and responsibilities describe working with the ANGEL learning management system. The system has been described as complex and delivers all of LCC's Distance Education and Hybrid courses (e-learning), serving students, faculty, and staff. ANGEL tracks and stores all course materials and student data, including grades. The PRR indicates Ms. Farland has sole responsibility for managing the ANGEL system. During the Director's review conference, both parties confirmed that the majority of Ms. Farland's duties involved work on the ANGEL system. LCC acknowledges the ANGEL system is a large-scale system that impacts the college's mission.

During the Director's review conference, Ms. Farland indicated that LCC acquired two servers for the ANGEL system around 2006, which she described as a two-node cluster with attached storage system. Ms. Farland explained that the clusters work in tandem, meaning that one is an active server and the other is configured to automatically take over if necessary but is not considered a backup function. Ms. Farland indicated that she configured the servers and installed ANGEL on both. LCC noted that an ITS 4 position in her work unit built the clustered servers and that Ms. Farland then assumed the role of supporting and maintaining the servers housing the ANGEL system. Ms. Farland disagreed and stated that the ITS 4 position "plugged in the physical hardware and booted up the system." Ms. Farland indicated that she had to research and learn how to install ANGEL on the servers, including the installation and configuration of the components needed to integrate the system. Ms. Farland agreed that she supports and maintains the ANGEL

system on a daily basis. However, she emphasized that she also plans and executes all software installations and upgrades, including major software releases of SQL and ANGEL.

The following summarizes the breakdown of duties identified on the PRR:

- 50% Analyze, design, install, configure, monitor performance, and maintain a clustered failover server system, which coordinates the ANGEL learning management system with SQL, IIS, FTP, AUI, ISAPI filters and Streaming Media Services. Modify program code when necessary. Conduct capacity planning with future upgrades in mind. Rebuild system when necessary.

During the Director's review conference, Ms. Farland explained that the filters put in place certain restrictions. For example, filtering to protect copyrighted media files to ensure they are only available to users logged into ANGEL.

Ms. Farland also provided an example of the AUI in-house application, explaining that the program downloads information from an area like student enrollment and converts the data to a format compatible with ANGEL. Ms. Farland acknowledged that she did not write the AUI program but is responsible for ensuring it works with ANGEL. Ms. Farland also noted that she understands what is needed, and she implements, tests, and maintains applications that interface with ANGEL.

- 20% Maintain Active Directory. Monitor Symantec Anti-Virus System and Windows System Update Services; assign and maintain DHCP reserved IP addresses for staff laptops.
- 5% Design, install, configure, and maintain ANGEL Development Server test environment used to test possible changes prior to implementing to live system.
- 5% Analyze needs, design, create, and implement re-indexing, backup and archive processes for ANGEL's SQL databases and all ANGEL courses, as well as backup procedures for faculty and student files and data.
- 5% Analyze needs, design, install and maintain systems such as the new Streaming Media Service for the main LCC website. Analyze, create, and maintain a system which will protect copyrighted materials while making these media files available on the Internet.

During the Director's review conference, Ms. Farland acknowledged that she worked with an ITS 4 position in Network Services to create the ISAPI filters, indicating that he wrote the program code at her request and she implemented testing.

- 5% Resolving problems with the above integrated systems, communicating directly with ANGEL Support and programmers when necessary. Resolve all non-ANGEL problems by researching documents on Microsoft's website or other Internet sites.

5% Recommend, install, configure, troubleshoot and maintain both PC and Macintosh software and hardware.

5% Responsibility for the Document Imaging Systems.

In the Supervisor's Review section of the PRR, Ms. Farland's supervisor indicated that she receives supervision on a spot-check basis only. He also indicated that she has the authority to independently make decisions about ANGEL updates and backups, as well as PC and OS updates. Ms. Farland asserted that her supervisor's comments did not fully describe the level of responsibility assigned to her position. Since Mr. Jones did not participate in the Director's review conference, I also reviewed Ms. Farland's Performance Evaluation to gain further insight into the duties and responsibilities assigned to her position (Exhibit C-3). I did not consider the evaluation of her performance. Although the Performance Evaluation is from July 2006 to June 2007, it discusses Ms. Farland's work on the ANGEL system. On the Performance Evaluation, Mr. Jones, wrote, in part, the following:

Brenda's primary focus has become management of the Angel Server, operating system, and application software. . . . she has worked with the Distance Ed department to install 2 new servers in a cluster, which will be used to deliver the Angel On-Line courseware as well as audio and video media. . . . (Exhibit C-3).

In Ms. Farland's future performance expectations, Mr. Jones also wrote the expectation for Ms. Farland to "[c]ontinue primary job responsibility maintaining the Angel server cluster" (Exhibit C-3).

Class Specifications

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations. While examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification.

The **Information Technology Specialist 3** definition reads as follows:

In support of information systems and users in an assigned area of responsibility, independently performs consulting, designing, programming, installation, maintenance, quality assurance, troubleshooting and/or technical support for applications, hardware and software products, databases, database management systems, support products, network infrastructure equipment, or telecommunications infrastructure, software or hardware.

Uses established work procedures and innovative approaches to complete assignments and coordinate projects such as conducting needs

assessments; leading projects; creating installation plans; analyzing and correcting network malfunctions; serving as system administrator; monitoring or enhancing operating environments; or supporting, maintaining and enhancing existing applications.

The majority of assignments and projects are moderate in size and impact an agency division or large workgroup or single business function; or internal or satellite operations, multiple users, or more than one group. Consults with higher-level technical staff to resolve complex problems.

Some typical work examples identified in the ITS 3 class specification include:

- Conducts needs assessments . . . that may be applied to a division, large work group, or single business unit's requirements.
- Leads moderately sized projects.
- Creates installation plans; independently installs and configures hardware/software. Customizes off-the-shelf applications, coordinates work with and/or oversees vendors responsible for installing hardware/software . . . and systems. Creates and supports processing environments (e.g. test, demo, and production).
- Serves as system administrator. Identifies moderate operational problems that impact one division or large work group or single business function. Interacts with vendors to resolve straightforward problems. Works with vendors to identify and implement code changes; monitor service level agreements;
- Analyzes and corrects network malfunctions.
- Monitors and enhances operating environments to ensure optimal performance. . .
- Implements security policies and standards;
- Provides maintenance and operations support for applications. Develops and implements emergency fixes and resolves hardware system problems;
- Supports, maintains and enhances existing applications that generally impact one division, or large work group or single business unit

It is undisputed that Ms. Farland supports and maintains the ANGEL system and Document Imaging systems. As a result, her duties and responsibilities fit within the ITS 3 classification. However, Ms. Farland has been assigned sole responsibility for managing the ANGEL system, which encompasses a higher-level of responsibility. The PRR indicates that the course management system includes approximately 300 courses per quarter and serves approximately 2200 users (Exhibit A-5, page 2). LCC acknowledges the ANGEL

system is a large-scale, complex system impacting the mission of the college. LCC further recognizes Ms. Farland has “applied advanced technical knowledge to evaluate and resolve complex tasks on long term projects as well as ‘right-away’ emergencies, which could affect 200+ staff and students” (Exhibit B-1-a). While Ms. Farland’s duties and responsibilities are encompassed by the ITS 3 level, her duties and responsibilities exceed the scope of the ITS 3 classification.

The **Information Technology Specialist 4** definition reads, in part, as follows:

Performs analysis, system design, acquisition, installation, maintenance, programming, project management, quality assurance, troubleshooting, problem resolution, and/or consulting tasks for complex computing system, application, data access/retrieval, multi-functional databases or database management systems, telecommunication, project or operational problems.

As a senior-level specialist in an assigned area of responsibility . . . applies advanced technical knowledge and considerable discretion to evaluate and resolve complex tasks such as . . . conducting capacity planning; designing multiple-server systems; directing or facilitating the installation of complex systems, hardware, software, application interfaces, or applications; developing and implementing quality assurance testing and performance monitoring; . . . acting as a liaison on the development of applications; . . . developing security policies and standards.

Incumbents understand the customer’s business from the perspective of a senior business person and are conversant in the customer’s business language. Projects assigned to this level impact geographical groupings of offices/facilities, and/or regional, divisional, or multiple business units with multiple functions. The majority of tasks performed have wide-area impact, integrate new technology, and/or affect how the mission is accomplished.

The Department of Personnel Glossary of terms for Classification, Compensation, & Management defines **specialist** duties as those involving “intensive application of knowledge and skills in a specific segment of an occupational area.”

<http://www.dop.wa.gov/CompClass/CompAndClassServices/Pages/HRProfessionalTools.as>

Further, complex technical tasks are those that require substantial application of knowledge and experience of a variety of technical procedures, processes, materials and/or equipment to accomplish tasks independently and to decide which rules, processes, materials or equipment to use in order to effectively accomplish work activities.

In Duong v. Employment Security Department, PAB Case No. ALLO-00-0034 (2001), the former Personnel Appeals Board (PAB) provided guidance on the level of work assigned at the Information Technology Systems Specialist 4 (ITSS 4) level. Effective June 1, 2005, the ITS 4 classification replaced the ITSS 4 classification. However, the substance of the classes did not change significantly. In Duong, the Board determined that senior

professional-level specialists were “responsible for complex systems . . . that have a broad impact” and that incumbents use “discretion and independent evaluation to determine how to approach a problem and meet complex system needs.”

Ms. Farland performs analysis, system design, installation, maintenance, troubleshooting, problem resolution, and/or consulting tasks for complex computing systems, applications and database management systems. Besides maintaining the ANGEL system, Ms. Farland's PRR indicates that she “[c]onducts capacity planning with future upgrades in mind” (Exhibit A-5, page 2). Ms. Farland further indicated that she plans and executes all ANGEL software installations and upgrades (Exhibit C-1). The level of responsibility is supported by Mr. Jones's comments on the Performance Evaluation, which also note that she “worked with Distance Ed department to install 2 new servers . . . used to deliver the Angel On-Line courseware as well as audio and video media” (Exhibit C-3). Mr. Jones's comments support Ms. Farland's indication she works closely with the Director of e-learning. At the ITS 4 level, incumbents understand the customer's business from the perspective of a senior business person and are conversant in the customer's business language. Additionally, the majority of tasks Ms. Farland performs to manage and support the ANGEL system have wide-area impact and affect how LCC's mission is accomplished.

While examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification. Typical work examples identified at the ITS 4 level most in line with Ms. Farland's assigned duties and responsibilities include:

- Conducts capacity planning to determine the needs of an assigned area. Analyzes new capabilities that may be applied.
- Designs multiple-server systems . . . to meet regional, divisional, or multiple business unit needs. Designs specialized interfaces, file transfers, data gathering and integrator systems . . .
- Designs/re-designs systems which may include such tasks as . . . re-configuring existing systems. Builds systems to meet required standards and integrates and certifies software/hardware.
- Plans, consults, coordinates and . . . facilitates the installation of systems, hardware, software, application interfaces, or applications. Resolves complex installation problems . . . Creates and supports processing environments.
- Identifies and resolves multiple-server problems . . . Works with vendors to solve complex problems (as referenced in Exhibits C-5 & 6).
- Acts as a liaison on the development of applications and modifications to existing applications.
- Develops and implements quality assurance testing and performance monitoring . . .

- Develops back-up plans and processes, performs recovery as needed . . .

Based on the level, scope and diversity of the overall duties and responsibilities of Ms. Farland's position, the Information Technology Specialist 4 classification is the best fit.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The mailing address for the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) is P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911. The PRB Office is located at 600 South Franklin, Olympia, Washington. The main telephone number is (360) 664-0388, and the fax number is (360) 753-0139.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c: Brenda Farland
Susan Parvey, LCC
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

Brenda Farland v. Lower Columbia College

ALLO-08-082

List of Exhibits

A. Filed by Brenda Farland November 4, 2008:

1. Request for Director's Review form
2. Allocation Determination Letter dated October 6, 2008
3. Email from Susan Parvey RE: Desk Audit
4. Classification Specs for ITS4
5. Position Review Request form dated & signed August 2008

B. Filed by LCC December 23, 2008:

1. Allocation Determination letter dated October 6, 2008 (duplicate of A-2)
 - a. Employee Request for Position Review Discussion/Conclusion
2. Position Review Request form dated & signed August 2008
3. Classification Specification for ITS3
4. Classification Specification for ITS4
5. May 24, 2005 letter from Nolan Wheeler to Brenda Farland: notification of position class resulting from class consolidation
6. 2002-2003 Position Description
7. Organizational Chart

C. Filed by Brenda Farland December 23, 2008:

1. Applicant response to denial of reallocation (Ms. Farland's argument)
2. Ms. Farland's resume (considered only as her characterization of her assigned work)
3. Employee evaluation development and performance plan July 2007 (considered only the documentation of work performed)
4. Hershey systems upgrade requirements
5. Angel/eLearning Course management System Support samples
6. Hershey/Singularity document imaging support samples
7. Class specification for ITS4—(contains highlighted items by Ms. Farland)